

Regular Meeting

Agenda Item #	6
Meeting Date	September 10, 2007
Prepared By	Sara Anne Daines HCD Director
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Resolution of Support for the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange's Community Investment Tax Credit Application (CITC)
Background	<p>The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange has requested Council support of an application to the Community Investment Tax Credits (CITC) program.</p> <p>The CITC program, administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), provides support to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations such as the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange through the award of State tax credits. The credits can be used as incentives for businesses to donate money, goods or real property in support of certain operational and programmatic costs. Based on the income and tax structure of the individual business, the net cost of the donation could be as low as \$0.27 for every \$1.00 contributed to the organization. CITC allocations are awarded on a competitive basis and require the support of the local municipality.</p> <p>If approved, the tax credits would be used to finance the Dance Exchange's proposed <i>Telling Your Own Story</i> project. As noted in the accompanying narrative, <i>Telling Your Own Story</i> is an after-school and summer program for youth ages 11-21. The focus of the program is on English Language Learners, low-income level, immigrant, and minority students in targeted school communities. The program is designed to teach participants how to use their personal experiences in combination with creative writing, visual, performing, and media arts to produce autobiographical art works.</p> <p>Additional information on the program and the pending CITC application will be provided by Ms. Jane Hirshberg, Managing Director & CEO of the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange.</p>
Policy	<p>"To (f)oster an atmosphere/environment for children and adults to experience the arts and humanities; encourage public education and lifelong learning in and through the arts and humanities through partnerships; promote a community of culturally aware residents."</p> <p><i>Creative Vision: A Cultural Plan for the City of Takoma Park (Adopted 2005)</i></p>
Fiscal Impact	None
Attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liz Lerman Dance Exchange: Project Narrative and Fact Sheet Resolution of Local Support
Recommendation	To adopt the attached Resolution
Special Consideration	None

Fact Sheet for Takoma Park City Council

Liz Lerman Dance Exchange will be applying to the Community Investment Tax Credit program that is part of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to encourage local businesses to support the Dance Exchange's involvement in a project called *Telling Your Own Story*. We are asking the Takoma Park City Council to approve our involvement in this project by creating a resolution stating such so that we can continue in our process to apply for tax credits made available through DHCD that would be awarded to local businesses who support the Dance Exchange in this work.

Telling Your Own Story is a powerful community-building initiative developed by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. It will bring AHCMC into partnership with two distinct community service providers — community-based organizations that focus on at-risk youth and local arts and humanities organizations. The community-based organizations include:

- Center of Cultural Diversity (Wheaton) a service agency for immigrant populations in the County;
- Community Bridges (Silver Spring) an organization providing services to low-income, immigrant middle school age girls;
- Identity, Inc., which provides services to Latino youth in Montgomery County;
- Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, providing services to youth in the County; and
- Passion 4 Learning, a community-based organization that works with youth on literacy and technology skills (computer graphics, web design).

Cultural organizations participating include:

- Pyramid Atlantic (Silver Spring), a center for print, paper and book arts;
- The Writers Center (Bethesda), a literary arts organization;
- Roundhouse Theatre Center (Silver Spring and Bethesda), a professional theatre company; and
- Liz Lerman Dance Exchange (Takoma Park), a contemporary dance organization in that works with community youth and adults.
- Montgomery Community Television, an independent, community access TV station, which provides television production training for County residents.

Population

Telling Your Own Story will serve approximately 75 youth, ages 14-21. These youth are English Language Learners, low-income level, immigrant, and minority students in targeted school communities. Targeted school communities demographics are: Asian 12%, Hispanic 33%, White, 23%, and African American 32%. The average Free and Reduced Meals Service (FARMS) rate is 40%.

The program

Telling Your Own Story is an after-school and summer program for youth ages 11-21. The program teaches participants how to use their personal experiences in combination with creative writing, visual, performing, and media arts to produce autobiographical art works. At the conclusion of each ten-week session, participants have the opportunity to share their creations with friends, family, and the public in a variety of ways. A Youth Advisory committee, comprised of youth from the targeted area, will be developed to guide program development.

At the heart of this program is the development of academic and interpersonal skills that can help minimize risky behavior and increase the likelihood that youth will complete their education. The program compels students to master literacy and arts skills, but also encourages creativity, critical thinking, improved self-esteem, and greater cooperation with peers.

Timeline

During the summer, AHCMC facilitated meetings with all organizations so they could become familiar with one another's work. The Dance Exchange will be working with Identity, Inc. during the fall semester and with Community Bridges during the spring semester. Classes will meet twice a week for ten weeks between September and December 2007, and ten weeks between January and March, 2008 after school or on weekends. Each class is one and one-half hours. Dance Exchange will provide two artists to work with the groups from each organization and coordinate the individual projects. At the end of the program (May 2008) there will be a culminating event (exhibition, performance, screening, etc) to showcase what the young people have accomplished.

The Outcomes

Telling Your Own Story is designed to specifically allow youth to develop their personal narratives about issues, concerns, or self identity and to create an artistic expression of that narrative through different multi-disciplinary approaches.

Program Objectives:

- Students will learn basic story structure and format by recording their own observations, breaking down, editing, rewriting and revising their own personal narrative;
- Students will learn to illustrate their story using mixed media collage, video, theatre, dance, and artist books;
- Students will learn to perform their narrative individually and in a group; and
- Students will learn to edit a final story on video and/or computer editing programs.

Program Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate improved reading and writing skills;
- Students will demonstrate proficiency at using mixed media, performance and visual images;
- Students will demonstrate improved attitudes toward school, friends, and family;
- Students will demonstrate a great sense of self-esteem and self-worth; and
- Students will demonstrate improvement in skills such as the ability to communicate effectively with peers, work as a team, and the ability to complete a project from start to finish.

At the end of the program, the youth will present their work to family, friends and the community in a series of culminating activities. These activities will include:

- Presenting public exhibitions and readings;
- Posting selections of student work on the AHCMC and Dance Exchange websites (www.creativemoco.com) (www.danceexchange.org)
- Working in conjunction with County-focused broadcast and print media (such as Montgomery County Television, ethnically-specific newspapers and radio stations) and Montgomery County Public Schools, we will ensure that students have the opportunity to share their work.

AHCMC will provide stipends to the participating organizations, but the work that Dance Exchange is planning to do requires more funding, which is why we are choosing to ask our local community businesses to help us realize this project through gifts that would be eligible for tax credits, ideally. As the Dance Exchange establishes itself as a local organization, in addition to keeping national and international presences in myriad settings, this project provides a unique opportunity to solidify its constituent and donor bases in the County where the company is based.

Introduced By:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

Resolution 2007-

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY
INVESTMENT TAX CREDITS TO THE LIZ LERMAN DANCE EXCHANGE
FOR ITS *TELLING YOUR OWN STORY* PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange (the “Dance Exchange”), a nonprofit organization located within the City of Takoma Park Maryland, proposes to undertake the project described above (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Dance Exchange has proposed the undertaking of the project, *Telling Your Own Story*, which is an after-school and summer program for youth ages 11-21 in targeted school communities; and

WHEREAS, *Telling Your Own Story* (the “Project”) teaches participating youth how to use their personal experiences in combination with creative writing, visual, performing, and media arts to produce autobiographical art works; and

WHEREAS, the Dance Exchange has applied to the Department of Housing and Community Development of the State of Maryland for approval of the Project and an allocation of tax credits for business entities that contribute to the Project, under the Department’s Community Investment Tax Credit Program; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council has reviewed the proposed Project and expressed its support of the Dance Exchange and its efforts to work with low-income level, immigrant, and minority students.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Takoma Park, Maryland hereby expresses approval of the Project and supports the allocation of State tax credits through the Maryland Community Investment Tax Credit Program.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2007.

Kathy Porter
Mayor

ATTEST:

Jessie Carpenter
City Clerk